



LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Celebrating 25 Years of Advocacy & Achievement

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Dr. Harriette F. Williams

APPROVED MINUTES

The General Meeting of the Commission for Children and Families was held on Monday, **April 19, 2010**, in Room 739 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles. **Please note that these minutes are intended as a summary and not as a verbatim accounting or transcription of events at this meeting.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT (Quorum Established)

Carol O. Biondi	Steven M. Olivas, Esq.
Patricia Curry	Dr. Maria A. Rochart
Ann Franzen	Sandra Rudnick
Susan F. Friedman	Stacey Savelle
Helen A. Kleinberg	Adelina Sorkin, LCSW/ACSW
Dr. La-Doris McClaney	Martha Trevino Powell
Rev. Cecil L. Murray	

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT (Excused/Unexcused)

Dr. Harriette F. Williams

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Curry at 10:03 a.m.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Self introductions were made.

III. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

- **April 19, 2010**

Action Taken:

On motion of Commissioner Kleinberg, seconded by Commissioner Sorkin, the agenda for April 19, 2010, was unanimously approved, with the following changes:

- Item VI-d was revised to read "California Youth Committee Connection (CYC)."
- Item VI-e, "DCFS Red Team", was continued to the meeting of May 17, 2010.
- Item IV-f, "Title IV-E Waiver Update", was continued to the meeting of May 3, 2010.

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IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- **March 15, 2010**

Action Taken:

On motion of Commissioner Sorkin, seconded by Commissioner Kleinberg, the minutes for March 15, 2010, were unanimously approved.

V. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Curry announced that Ms. Sandra Barbee, Chief, Commission Services, has accepted a new position with the Office of the Treasurer and Tax Collector and is leaving the Executive Office. She thanked Ms. Barbee for her contribution in transitioning the Commission to the Executive Office Commission Services Division.

Chair Curry proposed drafting of a letter to the Board of Supervisors suggesting that Los Angeles County make *Permanency* a priority, over *Mentoring* and/or other child-care programs. No action was taken.

VI. PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS

a. DCFS Youth Permanency Units Update

Maryam Fatemi, DCFS

Ms. Fatemi, reported the following:

- In 2004, DCFS placed a major focus on *Permanency* for children in care.
- In the past, parents of children in foster care were not always apprised of the status of their children. This was troubling because children were placed in multiple homes, hospitals, or other facilities, and DCFS' goal is ensure that a child has a home to return to once they transition out of foster care.

Ms. Lisa Parrish, DCFS, added that Ms. Fatemi, Ms. Amaryllis Watkins, and she co-chaired a committee on Permanent Placement, which spawned the Youth Permanency (YP) Units. DCFS currently has three YP Units with staff specifically trained in reconnecting youths with their families.

Mr. David White and Cindy Hathaway, DCFS, provided a PowerPoint presentation ([copy on file](#)) and reported the following:

- Six primary goals of YP include:
 1. Increased connectedness and engagement with siblings, parents, relatives and non-related extended family members (NFEFM) through CSW intervention;
 2. Increased stability for youth;
 3. Assessment for adoption if youth is unable to return home;

4. Assessment for guardianship when reunification with parents or adoption is not feasible;
 5. Placement of youth at the lowest possible level of care while ensuring safety; and
 6. Connecting emancipated youth with at least one durable committed adult.
- The three YP pilot offices were created (Metro North in October 2005, Pomona in November 2007, and Santa Clarita in March 2009) through Title IV-E Waiver funding approved by the Board of Supervisors.
 - YP Units received specialized training, curriculum included:
 1. *Youth Permanency Overview* (Bob Lewis, Trainer)
 2. *Family Finding and Engagement* (Kevin Campbell, Trainer)
 3. *3-5-7 Model Grief and Loss Life Books* – (Darla Henry, Trainer)
 4. Youth Permanency Practical Application for Case Workers - (L.A. Consortium)
 5. *Families For Life* training and ongoing case consultation (LA County is one of the leading agencies that is engaging in this type of training)
 - Youth must meet at least two of the following criteria to be transferred to the YP Units: a) have no or limited family connections; b) have had multiple placements within a short period of time; c) have heavy substance abuse problems; d) have recent psychiatric hospitalization; or e) have repeated incidents of runaway behavior.
 - The *Families for Life Model* is a collaborative process between the youth and the CSW; however, program is mostly planned by the youth.
 - The YP Program has won several awards, including the 2009 National Association of Counties (NACO) Award, and the 23rd Annual Productivity and Quality Award.
 - A grant for training was received from the California Permanency Youth Project, saving Los Angeles County approximately \$67,200 a year.

Testimonials were given by two youth who were assisted through the YP program.

Action Taken:

The Commission received and filed the Youth Permanency Update report provided by DCFS.

b. Probation Permanency Program Update

Dave Mitchell, Probation

Mr. Mitchell, Probation, reported the following:

- The Probation Department is having a Tri-Annual Peer Quality Review conducted by the State in which DCFS and Probation are assessed on outcomes of youth that do not establish permanent connections before aging out of the system. This review will aid in identifying areas of needed improvement.

- Federal Law 110 recently passed Public Law 110-351 which mandates a 90-day transition plan for all youth over the age of 17 exiting the system.
- Probation is now required to enter youth data into the CWS/CMS system.
- The House unanimously passed AB12 and it is now pending in the Senate. AB12 would require the Department to amend its foster care plan to extend care to specified individuals from age 18 to 21.
- Judge Nash implemented a requirement for DCFS and Probation to prepare a 30-day report on youth under medication in group homes and those who age out. Reports are in response to concerns of youth being over-medicated or administered inappropriate levels of medication, or to assess if psychotropic medication is needed. Probation Officers in conjunction with DMH Staff will prepare the reports required by the Children's Court.

Princess Burks, Probation, reported the LA County Probation Department had its first successful adoption in 2006; the first adoption in this department's history. The second adoption is scheduled to take place in April 2010. Two successful legal guardianships have also taken place within the Department. However, because most youths *age out* by the time they qualify for KinGAP, Guardianship remains a challenge.

Kendra Hamilton, Probation, added AWOLS are barriers in reunifying youths with their families. The only way they can be prevented is establishing good relationships between youth and Probation Officers. Only seven Probation Officers are assigned to Reunification and the current case number is 56; more resources could be used.

Action Taken:

The Commission received and filed the verbal reports on the Probation Permanency Program Update provided by Dave Mitchell and other Probation staff.

c. Independent Living Program (ILP) Update

**Rhelda Shabazz, DCFS
Michael Verner, Probation
Jennie Serrano, CEO**

Chair Curry reported the Governor eliminated \$1.4 million in stipends for emancipating youth, and that the Transitional Housing Program (THP-Plus) is also in jeopardy. She provided copies of the following documents:

- Supervisor Antonovich's motion (Item 26-B of February 23, 2010/Item 6 of March 2, 2010) ([copy on file](#)) - "Creating a Fourth Child Welfare Outcome Goal – "Self-Sufficiency."
- A document with recommendations by several children's advocacy agencies in response to a memo dated December 23, 2009 by the Chief Executive Officer regarding the \$2.2 million in reductions to the ILP budget for FY 2009-10 ([copy on file](#)).

Rhelda Shabazz, DCFS, reported the following:

- There is a breakthrough series collaborative and partnership with the Casey Family Programs, the State Department of Social Services, and eleven Counties working on redesigning ILP at the State level. This resulted from the National Governors Association meeting at which California was a participant. It was established that Permanency, Life-Long Connections, and Education were key to the success of *aging out* care. The next meeting is scheduled for May 3-6, 2010.

Jennie Serrano, CEO, reported the following:

- In response to Supervisor Antonovich's Board motion (Item 26-B of February 23, 2010/Item 6 of March 2, 2010 [copy on file](#)), the Board instructed the CEO to look at realigning existing Departmental revenues and expenditures to support new strategies towards *self-sufficiency* for youth, i.e., housing, education, employment, well-being, etc. CEO was also asked to look at the feasibility of centralizing youth services, and/or integrating youth self-sufficiency services with various County departments to create a seamless service delivery and to create an evaluation mechanism to ensure that self-sufficiency is being reached.
- Kathy House, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, has taken the lead in the request from the Board to harness all stakeholder input from various County departments, out-of-County partners, and private philanthropists. There is currently a 25-member team, and a report to the Board should be ready by June 30, 2010.

Copies of memos by the Chief Executive Officer dated December 23, 2009 and April 2, 2010, were distributed ([copies on file](#)).

Michael Verner, Probation, reported the following:

- The Probation Department is working with the State on Probation access to CWS/CMS. This is a major undertaking because this is the first time the Department is required to input data into the system.
- The first phase of the State's mandate is inputting data on the 90-day Transition Plan. A copy of the *ALL COUNTY LETTER* (ACL) NO. 09-97 was distributed ([copy on file](#)). The 90-day Transition Plan requires that Probation assists the youth with completing the form before they age out, so that they leave the system with a plan.

Action Taken:

The Commission received and filed the verbal Independent Living Program (ILP) Update provided by Rhelda Shabazz, DCFS, Jennie Serrano, CEO, and Michael Verner, Probation.

d. California Youth Connection (CYC) Legislative Update **Rebecca Leach, Coordinator
CYC Southern Region Policy**

Jacque Lindeman, California Youth Connection (CYC), reported the following:

- California Youth Connection (CYC) is the State's only non-profit youth advocacy and leadership organization dedicated to giving current and former foster youth the skills necessary to engage directly with policymakers to improve the foster care system.
- CYC's Executive Director left to start the National Foster Youth Action Network (NFYAN), a national association that will be implementing CYC's model in various states.
- CYC has a staff of 13-full time workers for the entire state.
- CYC has two arms, the leadership arm and the policy arm.

Rebecca Leach, CYC, distributed the CYC 2009 Summer Leadership and Policy Conference Report ([copy on file](#)), and reported the following:

- Chantel Johnson, Legislative and Policy Coordinator, has been sitting on coalitions that address issues such as budget cuts on welfare, potential loss of THPs, and the AB12 coalition.
- Two bills are being sponsored by CYC: AB12, which extends foster care services to age 21; and AB1852, which requires Family Finding and Engagement training for all social workers in the State. CYC assisted in the passing of AB1393, which encourages colleges and universities to allow foster youth students to remain in housing at college dormitories year round.
- CYC will hold a four-day national conference in San Jose this summer; with all 30 chapters in attendance. The major topic for discussion at the conference will be improvements in the child welfare system, and possible recommendations that can be made to the Legislative Committee.
- May is Foster Care Awareness Month; CYC will have a big rally in support and will meet with Governor Schwarzenegger.
- CYC received a public endowment grant to address public and mental health in the foster care system. A summit meeting is planned for November 2010, and two CYC members from each regional office will be attending.
- CYC meets with DCFS Director Trish Ploehn on a quarterly basis to discuss foster care issues like Family Finding and Engagement, AB12, and other concerns.

Action Taken:

The Commission received and filed the California Youth Connection (CYC) Legislation Update provided by Rebecca Leach, CYC, Southern Region Policy Coordinator and other CYC staff.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Trish Ploehn, DCFS, introduced Mr. Nick Bott, DCFS' new Public Information Officer.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There was none.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Curry at 12:00 p.m.